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EXPERIMENTALISTIC TENDENCIES IN MODERN HINDI POETRY

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The content and form of poetry of any age in the history of a language is decided by the cultural development and the intellectual standard of the contemporary society—or at least a part of the society in case poetry alienates itself from the masses and lives in the limited circle of the privileged classes.[1] The various stages in the history of any Indian or foreign language, with their distinguishing features in selection of subjects and mode of exposition will substantiate this.

Modern Hindi poetry has been no exception. The idealistic, realistic, symbolic-mystic and experimentalistic tendencies exhibited at various stages will be found quite natural and conditioned by the intellectual and emotional traits of the society in the period concerned.

Back-ground :

The second half of the nineteenth century under the influence of the social and religious movements led by Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Vivekananda and Anne Besant saw the wave of nationalism sweeping over the whole of India. The impact of this on Hindi poetry was the dawning of a new age. Bharatendu Harischandra and his circle were responsible for the this era of renaissance. The efforts of these poets as well as that of the social reformers were directed to striking at the root of the social evils which had been perpetuated by dogmatic traditions. Hindu Religion which had lost its soul and degenerated into a system

1. The heroic ballads and Riti poetry in Hindi may be considered good examples. In the former, the poets glorified their kings by chronicling their real and fictitious heroic deeds, while in the latter they wrestled with poetic styles, and elaborately described libidinal behaviours. Both were limited to the courts of feudal princes,

of ritualistic behaviours, had imposed a vegetative life over a large mass of population. Besides, the two hundred years of slavery also had very disastrous effects on sicial life. The socio-economic environment had become complicated and several problems had been created. Conservative social institutions as caste system, polygamy and child-marriage along with the wide-spread illiteracy proved detrimental to the progress of the country. At this critical stage Hindi poets also realised their responsibility to augment the national effort for confederating the disintegrated society and achieving Independence.

This stream of reformist poetry with strong social consciousness continued to flow in the early decades of the twentieth century—and thereafter as a narrow stream. As the Independence Movement gained strength, it became more popular. Poets like Maithilisaran Gupta, Ram Naresh Tripathi, and Makhanlal Chaturvedi, though conservative in outlook, realised the need of the moment. Maithilisaran's *Bhārat-Bhāratī*, once banned by the British Government, was a very popular work. It described our hoary past and dark present, and expressed the hopes for a bright future. Tripathi's '*Pathik*' and '*Milan*' are long story-poems with romantic themes and national ideals. Makhanlal's '*Chāh*' (Wish) and '*Mai hūn-ēk Sipāhī*' (A Soldier I am) are small but fine pieces inspiring patriotism. All these poets with great respect for our traditional culture were moderatists.

Progressivism :

Later this social consciousness reached a culmination in the progressive poetry, well represented by Balakrishna Sharma 'Navin' and Ramdhari Singh 'Dinakar'.[1] Highly aware of the realities of life, the progressivists dealt with almost all problems of social life. The life and problems of the down-trodden masses gained entry for the first time in the realm of poetry. The wide-spread illiteracy and its evil effects as superstitions and fossilization of ideas, the abject poverty of the masses, the callousness and cankers of the rich, and the deplorable social institutions were all brought to light and vehemently condemned.

1. Many poems of Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala', Rameshwar Sukla 'Anchal', and Bhagavaticharan Varma also may be considered progressive. Later poems of Mahadevi and Pant also show progressive tendencies.

Though the progressivists in Hindi sometimes tended to be revolutionary, they can hardly be said to have been under the influence of Marxism or Leninism, or their literary counterpart Socialist Realism. None of them was quite free from the ideals established by Indian tradition.[1] Utopian ideals looming in their minds limited their field of vision and deterred them from achieving the disinterestedness of the realists. Subjective impression which is the soul of good poetry was also lacking.

Symbolism and Mysticism:

Simultaneous with this highly objective kind of poetry, and as a sort of reaction against it, the twenties and the thirties of the present century produced a more aesthetic stream—the stream of symbolism and mysticism, which gave Hindi its best works of the twentieth century. It is in this period, Hindi poetry rediscovered the world of emotions and sentiments which had been altogether lost after the Devotional Period. Jayashankar Prasad, Sumitranandan Pant and Mahadevi Varma were responsible for the enrichment of lyric poetry in modern Hindi. These three, each with strong individuality and sublime feelings, marvellously succeeded in weaving out the fine fabric of lyric. They were against gross materialism and objectiveness, and were inclined to avoid normal or actual *life and its problems*. Very often they longed to escape from this incessantly repulsive world of realities and take asylum in a luminous world of imagination—a world of colourful dreams and gleeful fantacies, cloudy ideas and intense feelings, impersonal relations and metaphysical fancies.

Nature was a beloved theme for the subjectivists, from which they received immense pleasure and inspiration. They personified almost everything in nature, and made it the incarnation of beauty. Human emotions were treated in isolation, but the subtlest of them were intensified and presented in such an effective manner, that even the abstractness did not impede the visualizing of poetic imageries. The chastened and passionate style selected by them was quite suited for their subjects.

1. The entirely different turn taken by Dinakar in 'Kurukṣetra' and 'Urvaśi' confirms this. In these epics the poet deals with more important problems concerned with humanity at large.

This subjectivism is essentially different from that of the present day poets, who are bent on analysing human feelings rather than taking them over to a level trancending the normal life. They equated the life of man with his emotional existence and explained all his relations with nature or other things in term of emotional attachment. They found a harmony in the mosaic pattern of life and in the abstruse elements of its environments. This subjective poetry did not disect the human mind, nor did it analyse the conflicts it has to encounter. It did not preach ideals to reform the world drenched in malice and sin ; it did not sell drugs for curing the evils of modern social life or the manias of perverted individuals. But it was poetry—sublime poetry—with a rich emotional content and a high degree of artistic perfection. The charming imageries, the discreet selection of polished expressions, the invariably new view-point all clearly indicated how sensitive these poets were to the delicacies in life and nature and how grave and sagacious in translating them into the form of poetry.

Still it must be commented that sometimes, as in the case of Pant, the poems became weary with stereo-typed phrases and symbolic expressions. As Prof. Indarnath Madan remarks, " The poems are monotonously packed with garlands, flowers, dawn, music, stringed instruments, chords, clouds and rays."[1] Mahadevi's poems also lack the charm of variety. She is a poet of tears—an embodiment of pessimism—ever engaged in the quest of the Infinite, which she discovers in her own pearl-like tears.[2]

It is in this back-ground that Experimentalistic poetry developed. Neither the realistic progressive poetry neglecting the abstract sentiments of the heart and the finer aspects of creative art, nor the subjective symbolic-mystic poetry estranged from practical life with its social complexities and mental disturbances, could satisfy long the growing rationality of the poet living in the midst of a thousand problems, and trying to understand man and his fluctuating mental activities. The result was the appearance of new tendencies leading to experimentalism.

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1. Indarnath Madan : *Modern Hindi Literature*, 1939, Lahore, p. 44.
2. *Adhunik Kavi* : *Mahādevi*, 1943, Allahabad, p. 7

The First Signs:

The publication of *Tār Saptak* in 1941 marks an important turning point in the history of Hindi poetry. It is a collection of poems which defied the prevalent poetic styles. They were written in blank verse, but, according to the poets, they possessed some rythm. The attitude of these poets towards life was different from that of the progressivists and the symbolists. They did not condemn the vices of the world and prescribe solutions for the problems of life as the progressivists. Nor did they try to escape from the problems into an imaginary world of emotions as the symbolic poets. They analysed life on the basis of its reactions in the different layers of mind, and the internal conflict caused thereby. Though they were conscious about external realities, the observation was not purely objective. The impact of the realities on the internal existence of the poet was considered more important. Thus a synthesis of objectivism and subjectivism was achieved. These were new elements which distinguished the poems of *Tār Saptak* from earlier Hindi poetry.

Though *Tār Saptak* is generally considered to be the first published volume of experimentalistic poetry, it may well be noted that several years before this, the process of a slow change towards this direction was visible in some isolated poems. But the poets themselves were not much conscious of it. Much earlier, Nirala had abandoned the traditional metrical styles and composed blank verses, which he thought, were best suited for conveying the most intense feelings of man. Nirala is not to be considered an experimentalist, nor can blank-verse be considered the most important trait of experimentalistic poetry. Still this attempt of his marks a trend of the period. Some of the progressive poets also were unconsciously leaning towards a new style in the second half of the thirties. The beginning of the forties showed clearly the rudiments of experimentalistic tendencies. Internal conflict began to be considered an essential factor of poetry. An objectivity differing from that of the progressivists and a subjectivity quite differerent from that of the symbolists merged to give a novel combination.

The dissatisfaction at the superficiality of the progressivists and the etherialisation of the symbolists, as well as the realisation

of the inadequacy of the existing styles for the proper delineation and analysis of the more complex aspects of life pointed to the direction towards which future poetry was to make its progress.

While native tendencies were taking such a turn, Western influence also had been at work. Dialectical materialism with its theory of conflict between the old and the new, and naturalism emphasising on the effect of heredity on human traits have had their impact on human thinking. Psychological theories propounded by Freud, Jung, Adler and others also were responsible for revolutionary changes in the line of thinking, which world-literature could hardly escape. These, among several other factors, have been responsible for introducing rational thinking and intellectual analysis in the field of poetry all over the world. Hindi poetry has been affected by these directly, or indirectly through Western literature.

The poems in *Tār Saptak* showed remarkable variations from the styles hitherto known in the history of Hindi poetry. They were written in blank-verse. The poets never posed to have an ideal. On the other hand they tried to prove, though unsuccessfully at the early stages, that life cannot be resolved into a set of well-defined factors, nor can it be analysed on the basis of some ready-made principles. They expressed doubt in established values and challenged the idealistic theories unquestionably accepted by tradition.

The reception given to *Tār Saptak* by contemporary critics was none too pleasant. Admirers of the traditional styles made caustic remarks about the new attempts. Nandadulare Vajapeyi remarks that experimentalistic poetry reveals neither a basic mental experience nor a mature and well defined individuality. Its aim is neither creative art nor revolution, but common-place entertainment and verbal display. This aimless kind of poetry does not show any responsibility to society nor does it have any valuable message for mankind[1]. Dr. Rangeya Raghava also considered that experimentalism has achieved nothing but a mode of display of unconnected words and ideas.[2] According

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1. Nandadulare Vajapeyi: *Ādhunik Hindī Sahitya*, 2nd Ed., 1956, Allahabad, p. 69.

2. Rangeya Raghava: *Pragati-sil Sahitya kē Mānadaṇḍ*, 1954, Agra, p. 335 ff.

to Sachirani Gurtu, the experimentalists have not been able to evolve any fundamental philosophy. Vagueness, complexity and unintelligibility are the basis of their art.[1]

On considering the nature of this poetry in the back-ground in which it made its appearance, this attitude of the critics is explicable. The experimentalists showed such remarkable variation in content and style, that it took sometime for the critics and the common readers to view these ventures in the proper perspective and appreciate them.[2] The unusual style was akin to them. Metrical form was replaced by blank verses; musical rythm was completely lacking; the ideas were scattered in a loose manner—though the poets claimed a unity and concord in this looseness. All these could be received only with a sort of repugnance.

Another important reason for such adverse criticism was the immaturity of the poets themselves. Many of them had not developed their individuality, nor had they gained access to the domain of internal conflict, which is the soul of experimentalistic poetry. Some poets, as many of the critics, took form as the main object of experiment. With the abandoning of the metrical style, many minor poets without any appreciable originality or creative thinking tried to imitate Western poets and miserably failed. Some of them have already dwindled into nothing. It is for the ages to decide whether the works of others are to survive or not. However it must be admitted that the short period of the last twenty years has produced a number of fine pieces, rich in emotional content, brilliant in exposition and highly effective with imageries.

What is Experimentalism:

Experimentalism in this context should be taken to mean the artistic method attained by the poet in his efforts to discover a style capable of conveying his complex feelings while actually

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1. Sachirani Gurtu: *Vaichāriki*, 1962, Delhi, p. 37.

2. Some of them as Dr. Rangeya Raghava could not reconcile with experimentalism even as late as 1961. He has not recognised it as poetry at all.

Ref:—Kavitāyen, Sept. 1961, Jaipur.

experiencing a state of internal conflict. It is not a pragmatic attempt to invent something new in order to put a mask over the internal emptiness. The history of poetry in any language has been a chronicle of experiments with new forms of expression. Poets of all ages have been trying to evolve the medium best suited for their ideas and their individualities. Thus poetry is always experimental. But experimentalistic poetry, which is of recent origin is of quite a different nature.

Experimentalism precisely means what Zola meant by it in his *Roman Experimental* (*Experimental Novel*). Zola's naturalistic novels, which he called experimental novels emphasise the importance of a scientific approach for the study of the complex emotions of man. To him experiment means the mental experience of the individual involved in a conflict of opposing elements in the various layers of the mind. Most of the experimentalists in Hindi have also accepted mental conflict as an important factor of poetry.[1] The process of experiments consists in the mutual reaction of a conglomeration of vague and undefined feelings, often in discord. It is somewhat like a chemical reaction, in which various elements or compounds jointly react to form entirely new substances, generally with an absorption or emission of energy and often causing an explosion.

Denial of Tradition:

Such internal conflict, which the individual cannot overcome and the doubt about values and aims of life formulated hitherto by great thinkers have never been the subject of our poets of the past, who though viewing life as a whole resolved it into several simple factors, of which they selected whatever suited their disposition, and proceeded to construct well-defined and organised patterns. This pattern, the elements of which consistently contributed towards a coherent whole was considered an important feature of poetry. But the modern poet feels, or is forced to feel that life is not like patterns and it cannot be well represented by means of traditional styles. This doubt about traditional ideas and styles of expression has been a decisive force in the development of Hindi poetry in the last two decades.

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1. *Ref*:—*Tār Saptak*, Introduction by Agyeya.
Tīsara Saptak, 1959, Kashi, Foreword by Agyeya and self-introductions by Madan Vatsyayan and Kirti Choudhari,

On behalf of the experimentalists Agyeya has unequivocally declared that they are not committed to any ideology or school of thought and that they have no method or style common to all. Every poem is characterised by its individuality, reflecting the individuality of the poet[1]—and sometimes, we may add, a lack of individuality. Despite these words of Agyeya, it is not difficult to trace the common trends characterising experimentalistic poetry in Hindi.

Frustration:

Humanity is at present confronted with a kind of frustration in the field of moral ideas, and ethical values hitherto established have been questioned. But man, in spite of all his intellectual calculations, realises and is perplexed to realise, that his existence cannot be solely governed by the intellect. The intellect urging him to question the perfection of his own rationality has proved a challenge to itself. As a result he is not able to direct his potentialities with eonfidence to an orgnaised life based on values.

सींग और नाखून
लोहे के बख्तर कंधों पर
सीने में सुराख हड्डी का ।
    आँखों में घास - काई की नमी ।

एक मुर्दा हाथ
पाँव पर टिका
    उल्टी कलम थामे ।[2]

Nor is he able to attain the fulfilment of passionately cherished desires and ambitions.

तुम्हें भी विकल ज़िन्दगी की कथा सब
सुना दूँ ?
तड़प थी कि
बौने करों को बढ़ाकर पकड़ लूँ
अभी चाँद सूरज ।

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1. Agyeya: *Tār, Saptak*, 1941, Introduction.
2. Shamsher Bahadur Singh: '*Sing aur Nakhūn*', in *Kuch Kavitayen*, p. 74.

मैं चाहता था सभी कुछ
बहुत से बड़े स्वप्न थे
उस हृदय में
नहीं थी, नहीं, शक्ति ही बस नहीं थी।

....

विगत स्नेह की स्निग्ध हरियालियाँ
आज
झुलसी हुई हैं।

....

मैं हूँ मरुस्थल
मैदान जलता हुआ-सा
पड़ा जो शिखर के चरण से बहुत दूर
जलता - सुलगता। [1]

The pensiveness of the symbolic or the mystic poets, often due to the nonfulfilment of desires is different from this. They aim at something above all worldly things, and in all humility accept their own weakness and inability to attain it. The pain is thus more imaginary than real. On the otherhand the experimentalist is not prepared to accept such a speculative aim, as it is not warranted by the intellect. He is concerned with the real complex problems of life, some of which man himself has created. He believes that with his intellect imperfect in many respects, he cannot come to any conclusion about the values of life. He has no self-confidence.

As the intellect is always in doubt, it is all the more difficult to classify men as sheep and wolves and to mark their acts as good and bad. Nalin Vilochan Sharma says :—

सिद्धों के भी कैंसर होता है
उनके भी दिलों की धड़कनें

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1. Nemichandra Jain : '*Sunōge?*' in *Rūpambara*, 1960, Kashi, p. 302.

बन्द होती हैं । हम बगुला
बगल झाँकते । वे हंस
हो जाते हैं ।[1]

With such a concept about values it is not possible to stick on to any ideal and claim eternity for it. As a result the established values have been smashed, and man with all his intellectual achievements has not been able to establish new values. He is in an atmosphere of doubt and conflict. With his intellect under duress he believes that there is nothing as eternal truth. Eternal truth has to lose itself in the everflowing stream of life.

सत्य टूटकर नभ से आया
तो धरती की धारा में बह चला ।
और भी अनन्त सत्य उसे मिले
उसी तरह बहते हुए ?
उसने सोचा सत्यों के सिल सिले
धरती के खिलवाड़ हैं, खेल हैं ।[2]

The poet who has lost confidence in the so called eternal truths of life does not attempt to discover such truths or prescribe eternal ideals.

Human element:

But this denial of values[3] does not mean the denial of all human feelings and mutual bonds. On the other hand the poet's extra-sensitivity to the subtle feelings often enables him to paint excellent pictures. Such human element is very prominent in Kirti Chowdhari. Her 'Experience'[4] shows the ardent hopes of a man forced to face the realities of life. 'Expectation'[5] by the same poet again gives a glimpse of

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1. *Kavi*, Kashi, Aug. 1957, p. 118.
2. Bhavani Prasad Mishra: *Kavi*, Kashi, Oct. 1957, p. 150.
3. However experimentalists in Hindi have not been able to lose themselves to this philosophy of denial. The Indian tradition in them is so strong that they cannot easily endorse such a view.
4. '*Anubhav*' in *Kavi*, August, 1957, p. 125. and *Tīsarā Saptak*, p. 60.
5. '*Pratīkṣā*' in *Kavi*, June, 1957, p. 84. and *Tīsarā Saptak*, p. 113.

the never-dying hope of man. The most graceful qualities of man—his ability to feel and his thirst for love—are beautifully painted in ' From Ten to Six in the Demon-World ' [1] by Madan Vatsyayan, a poem dealing with the strained life of the machine age. The machine-operator, after spending the weary hours of the day among the demonly machines and fed up with the noise produced by them as if to scorn him and to pompously declare their superiority over man, finds salvation in the warm kiss of his beloved and the sweet prattling of his kid.

सब कुछ है, पर अभी लौटकर जब अपने क्वार्टर पहुँचूँगा,
' उस ' के आलिंगन की गरमी और बेटे के तुतले स्वागत की दुविधा में
एक आँख की निद्रा का सुख मुझे बदा है,
न कि तुमको भी ।[2]

Role of Tradition:

The negation of traditionally established values does not mean that the poet considers the present as an isolated entity. He does not even believe—as the progressivist often does—that we can completely ignore the past and make an unhindered march to the future. The present has to be based on the past, but it is not to be fossilised. The future has to bloom on the stalk of the present. ' The Son of Doubt ' [3] by Kedarnath Singh shows the unbreakable fetters by which man is bound to the past. The humanity with its hopeful eyes fixed on the future is symbolised by a small boy clinging to his father's hand, both marching forward along the path of life. The boy finds before him a dark mist which never vanishes. The father consoles him saying that he himself is the mist, and the mist which will vanish when the boy would leave his hand, may remain as a ' handful of darkness ', which he will have to forgive.

Effect of psycho-analysis

(a) Layers of the mind:

As poets of other schools, experimentalists also have endeavoured to study man and analyse his behaviour, internal and

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1. *' Asurapurī men Das se Che '*, *Tīsarā Saptak.*
2. *Tīsarā Saptak*, p. 159.
3. Kedarnath Singh : *' Śhankā-putra '*, *Kavi*, May 1957, Kashi, pp. 69-71.

external. But their attitude towards life is quite different. Their rational approach and scientific point of view lead them to an analysis of the deeper layers of mind, and the under current of social life. They see man as a being undergoing a life of conscious, partially conscious and unconscious existence. All his activities, individual and social, constructive and destructive are governed by these levels of consciousness. Several poems of Agyeya, Bhavaniprasad Mishra, Nalin Vilochan Sharma and Kedarnath Agrawal show the attempts of the poets to probe into the inner world. Even when they discuss social problems, they are projected into the various layers of mind and the responses recorded.

(b) Free association:

Another effect of the influence of psycho-analysis on modern thought has been the introduction of 'free-association' in the realm of poetry and other forms of literature. Psycho-analysts have proved that mental activities do not occur in a homogeneous pattern. It is practically impossible to find a concord among them. Who in the world has got his feelings cut to geometrical shapes and artistically arranged in a pattern? One cannot say when and how one's thoughts and imaginations run riot. The experimentalist tries to translate faithfully such a complexity of ideas and feelings into poetry. He does not pick and choose—at least he pretends not to!

A poet of the age of the heroic ballads would be satisfied with a graphic picture of the valient deeds of his hero fighting his enemy. A Tulasidas would have lost himself when eulogizing his patron-god, and would be more than satisfied when presenting a scene filled with a thousand beautiful things. A poet of the Riti period would easily paint the colourful picture of an inamorata dressed in magnificent robes, decked with pearls and diamonds, lying on her ornamental couch in her multi-storeyed palatial mansion angling the heart of a charming youth. In all these cases the background is exquisitely set and everything goes as desired and planned by the poet. The various elements of the environment, and the actions and feelings of the individuals themselves are all found to synchronise with one another. But a modern mind realises how unusual and unbelievable such a splendid homogenity is. Face to face with life, man

knows that he cannot depend upon happy coincidences, though he may perhaps desire to. Our recent poets are aware of this. They see the heterogeneous nature of the environment and the discordance of feelings. They picture the mind as an abode of mutually opposed feelings.[1] An experimentalist can see the wretched plight of an uncared for old woman, in the pleasant background of the beautiful spring.[2] He does not fail to hear the harsh sound of chappals mingled with the jingling of anklets. The responses produced in the mind also is not always in concord with the environment. A lullaby can disturb the mind and bring freely associated memories. 'I Could not Sleep'[3] by Pārasnāth Singh presents such a situation. The sweet lulling at the next house evokes in the mind of a man separated from his family disturbing memories about the family and keeps him awake throughout night. 'Part of a Machine'[4] by Girijakumar Mathur giving a glimpse of the cursed mechanical life of a clerk in a city revelling in luxuries presents another example of free association[5].

Uneasiness:

Experimental poetry in Hindi, as in European languages has a peculiar tone reflecting the mental uneasiness of the poet. It does not move smoothly and with ease as poetry of other ages. About the English poets of the Elizabethan age Mrs. Woolfe has remarked, "Though they may bore us—and they do—they never make us feel that they are afraid or self-conscious or that there is anything hindering, hampering, inhibiting the full current of

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1. नयी कविता परस्पर - विरोधी या विरोधी जान पड़नेवाले गुणों और विशेषताओं का संगम है।

—Kirti Choudhari-Vaktavya, *Tisara Saptak*, 1967.

2. *Ref* : *Śiśir ki Rākāniśi*—Agyēya : *Kavi bhārati* p. 682.
The poem gives the picture of an enchanting moon-lit night, in the peaceful emptiness of which, the poet sees some half-fed, naked children, the ruins of some ancient monuments, the bamboo curtains hung to a pillar, and a lame ass nearby walking on three legs.

3. '*Nīnd nahīn āyī*' in *Kavi*, Oct., 1957, p. 152.

4. '*Maśin ka Purjā*' in *Kavi-bhāratī*, Jhansi, 1953, pp. 697.700.

5. *Ṭūṭā tārā*' (Kedarnath Agrawal) in *Kavi-bhārati*, p. 688, and *Cūṛī ka ṭukṛā* (Girijakumar Mathur) in *Kavi-bhāratī* p. 696-697 may be cited as further examples.

their minds."[1] The same can be said of Tulasidas or Surdas—or to that effect about any of our ancient poets. They were quite clear in their mind about what they wanted to tell. They had full confidence in the ideals they preached, the messages they gave. Just the contrary is the case of the experimentalists. They cannot express their thoughts and sentiments as freely and undoubtedly as Tulasidas or Surdas had done. They have no school to popularise, no eternal ideals to preach, no established paths to tread. They are extremely self-conscious and aware of human limitations, including the non-reliability of human intelligence. The tenacious adherence to some religious or moral dictum, or to some mode of exposition so common with the poets of earlier periods is therefore quite akin to the experimentalists.

Experiments with form—

Imageries :

Kedarnath Singh has claimed that what he cares for most in poetry is imagery.[2] He considers it to be an important feature of creative writing. Any poet dealing with abstract emotions is bound to succeed only if he is able to project his ideas into the mind of the reader through well defined images. Kedarnath's poems present some examples, the best being '*The Son of Doubt*'.

But, none of the experimentalists can so far claim that their imageries have been particularly effective, or that they are at least as charming as the imageries of the symbolists. It is but natural that the experimentalist who penetrates into the deep layers of mind, the activities of which are only partially known to him, is not able to use the medium of the imagery to expose his complex feelings. After the age of symbolism, the imageries of the experimentalists seem gloomy, and often lifeless. Prasad, Pant and Mahadevi stand unparalled even today.

Styles :

The most important feature of the external form of experimentalistic poetry is the discord of metrical system.[3] Brevity

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1. Virginia Woolf: *Granite and Rainbow*, p. 14.
2. Kedarnath Singh: '*Vaktavya*' in *Tīsarā Saptak*, p. 181.
3. We cannot say that traditional metres are always an impediment to effective expositions of feelings. In fact, some metres by their own nature

and simplicity are desirable in poetry as in prose. But the requirements of poetry vests on the poet the responsibility of adopting the means which will enable him to transfer his feelings to the reader, without the least leakage. It is to be admitted that feelings cannot be completely translated into verbal expressions. That is why Plato scorned at poetry as "the imitation of imitation." However efficient the discovery-process of the poet be, however scrupulous his knowledge of the minute details and shades of the language be, a part of the emotion is invariably lost when being translated into well-defined words. It is for overcoming this difficulty—of course only partly—that experimentalists have deviced peculiar styles by coining some new expressions and sometimes displaying them in certain patterns. This style is often over-inflated and tasteless, but sometimes sharp and brilliant, with a touch of individuality.

However it must be understood that, for the experimentalist, style is only a subsidiary factor necessitated by the demands of the content. Many a poet has used the traditional styles.

मकड़ियों के जाल मुँह पर,
और सिर के बाल मुँह पर,
मच्छरों के दंश वाले,
दाग काले लाल मुँह पर।

—*Tīsarā Saptak.*

Mangala Varṣā by Bhavani Prasad Mishra in the ancient 'pada' style is another example. Shamher Bahadur-Singh, Kedarnath Singh and several others have also, though rarely, adopted the established styles.

But it is true that many have experimented with styles and failed to produce anything substantial. If the poems don't reflect any intense feeling, or complex idea, unrecordable in the restricted form of metre, then the display of words does not produce any effect.

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bring out feelings and produce some prticular effects, which is not possible by any other means.

भोर की
प्रथम किरण
    फीकी
अनजाने
जागी हो,
याद
    किसी की
अपनी
मीठी
    नीकी ।

—Agyeya: *Pratham Kiran, Rūpambara, p. 263.*

The usual metrical style would have served the purpose here—perhaps with a more charming rythm. Many of the beginners are anxious to flaunt newly hatched expressions, often vague and unintelligible, which renders their poems unreadable and irritating. Sometimes, as the poets claim, the vagueness is due to the vagueness of the poet's own feelings. But examples are not lacking, in which the style proves an impediment to understanding—not to speak of appreciation.

सनातन कथा	The Eternal Story
मान - - - -	Pride ... ...
* * *	* * *
मौन	Silence
* * *	* * *
मृत्यु - - - -	Death ... ...[1]

This is a poem in full by Shamsher Bahadur Singh !

The resistance against such styles has also been pretty strong. Madan Vatsyayan writes that such styles defying all

1. *Kavi*, June, 1957, p. 88,

understanding, and which do not translate abstract ideas into real mental experiences are weak and meaningless.[1] Agyeya considers that unintelligibility in itself is neither a desirable factor nor an objectionable one. But he asserts that it should not be used as a veil for the internal poverty of the poem.[2]

Rare examples of stream-of-consciousness style are found in some experimental poems.

अधुना हमारे पास
विशाल योजनायें हैं ;
शीतापंत्रित प्रशालायें हैं,
जहाँ आविष्कारों के बदले
दर्शन और शायरी है ;
भारतीय संस्कृति और बुश - शर्ट है ।[3]

(Śītāpantrita praśālāyen — standing for Śīta-tāpaniyantrita prayōgasālāyen = air-conditioned laboratories.)

एक क्षण का मिलना
फिर कर्म का प्रवाव
फिर कर्म का प्रभाह
और सब झूठ ।[4]

However, the style has not been very popular with Hindi poets.

Another typical example of an experimenlistic style may be noted in the following piece :—

अगर कहीं मैं तोता होता
तो क्या होता ?
तो - तो, ता - ता, तोता - तोता,
तोता होता ।

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1. *Tīsarā Saptak*, p. 120-121.
2. *Tīsarā Saptak*, Introduction, p. 14.
3. Nalin Vilochan Śarma : '*Anubam*' in *Kavi*, Aug., 1957, p. 117.
4. Shamsher Bahadur Singh : '*Jhūṭh Sab*' in *Kavi*, July, 1957, p. 107.

Asserting his individuality the poet declares that he is not like a parrot just repeating what is dictated by others, and which has nothing to do with his inner self. The meaninglessness of such mechanical repetition cannot be brought out in better words than :—

' tō—tō, ta—ta, tōta—tōta. '

Experimentalistic poetry thus shows remarkable variation in content and style from the poetry of other schools. It is a recent development in Hindi and it has succeeded in giving us several nice pieces, by a few promising poets during the last twenty years or so. Its best is yet to come.